

authors have been successful in the task which they set themselves.

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HIGH SCHOOL OF COMMERCE,
NEW YORK CITY.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

MARCH 11, 1913

The meeting of March 11, 1913, was held at the American Museum of Natural History at 8:15 P.M. Dr. E. B. Southwick presided. Ten persons were present.

The minutes of February 26 were read and approved. The announced scientific program consisted of a lecture on "Agriculture among the American Indians," by Dr. A. B. Stout.

The subject was presented from the viewpoint of popular economic botany. As an introduction, several views of typical Indian mounds were shown and a general discussion given of the extent of Indian life in America, especially in the area now embraced by eastern United States. The point was made that the so-called "mound-builders" were none other than the ancestors of the present Indians of the United States and that the domestication of all endemic plants which were in cultivation in America at the time of the discovery of the new world was the result of Indian agriculture. Views were shown of Indian cornfields and garden beds as they appear today after having remained undisturbed since the Indians raised the last crop on these fields. The conspicuous hills of the former and the long parallel ridges of the latter reveal the methods of planting of various field and garden crops. The most important plants which were cultivated by the American Indians were briefly described and illustrated by lantern-slides, their uses given and mention made of their importance in the agriculture of today. Some archeological and historical data were given regarding the origin of these plants and the extent to which they were cultivated.

The principal plants thus considered were as follows: Indian corn, the agaves, tobacco, potato, tomato, Jerusalem artichoke,

manihot, sweet potato, yautia, pumpkins and pumpkin-gourds, beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris* and *P. lunatus*), pecan, American plums, red-pepper, cinchona, quinoa, pineapple, Chilian strawberry and wild rice.

Besides these, mention was made of certain important food plants of ancient America which were also in cultivation in pre-historic time in Polynesia and Asia. A general summary of the 250 most important plants cultivated on a considerable scale in the fields, gardens, and orchards of the world shows that about 50 originated in the new world through domestication by Indians. The story of Indian agriculture is the story of America's contribution to the food, fiber and drug products that make for the welfare of mankind.

Meeting adjourned.

F. D. FROMME,
Secretary pro tem.

NEWS ITEMS

At the recent meeting of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences held in Washington, D. C., Dr. Erwin F. Smith was elected a member. It is reported in the daily papers that Dr. Smith has declined a \$10,000 position with the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research to retain one at \$4,000 a year with the Government, but there is no official confirmation of this matter.

Dr. E. L. Morris has returned from Arizona where he has been collecting material for a museum exhibit illustrating desert vegetation. He has spent considerable time in the Tucson Mountains getting photographs and plaster models of cactuses and other xerophytic plants.

Through the coöperation of the Bermuda Natural History Society and Harvard University, the Bermuda Biological Station for Research will be open this summer as usual for about six weeks, from the middle of June till August. Botanists or zoölogists wishing to avail themselves of this opportunity should communicate with Dr. E. L. Mark, 109 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass.